

The plan

EIGHT-WEEK SWIM SOS

THIS EIGHT-WEEK PLAN WILL HELP YOU TAKE THE PLUNGE AND BETTER YOUR SWIM TIMES

Meet the expert

Phil Mosley

Coaching editor of *Triathlon Plus*, Mosley has coached dozens of triathletes to success at every distance

THIS PLAN IS for anyone who has adopted the 'bury your head in the sand' approach to triathlon swimming. Don't worry, it happens a lot! People often enter a race, do the cycle and run training and conveniently ignore the swimming part. And then – normally with around two months to go, and sometimes less – they wake up in a panic and wonder how on earth they're going to finish the race.

That's why the training in this eight-week schedule is focused on fixing your swimming in the shortest time possible. There are still cycling and running sessions to be done, but they're designed to be super-efficient so you can dedicate more of your time where it's needed most: in the pool or open water.

As you may have realised by now, swimming is as much about technique as it is about fitness, so it's not enough to simply plough mindlessly up and down the pool thinking about last night's TV. We've

included six drills for you to practise, and worked them into some of the swim sessions prescribed in the plan. There's another skill you'll need to master too – open-water swimming – so in the last four weeks of this plan we suggest you do some outdoor wetsuit swimming before your race (see feature on page 50).

Beyond these plans, you should try to get one-to-one help from a swim coach or someone who knows their stuff. Self-help is good, but you just can't beat someone showing you how to swim properly.

As with previous training plans, there's a Training Zones section that describes the correct bike and run training intensities. Feel free to swap the sessions around to suit your weekly routine, but try not to take shortcuts. Triathlons are far more enjoyable when you're confident about your swimming, so make sure you put in the hard work. It's only for eight weeks, and two of those are recovery weeks anyway.

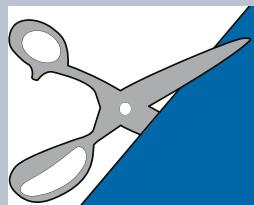
Are these plans for you?

To start these training plans you should already be able to:

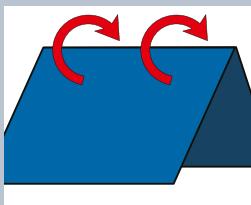
- Ride your bike steadily for 90 minutes
- Jog for 30 minutes
- Swim 100m non-stop

How it works

Get your guide ready to go



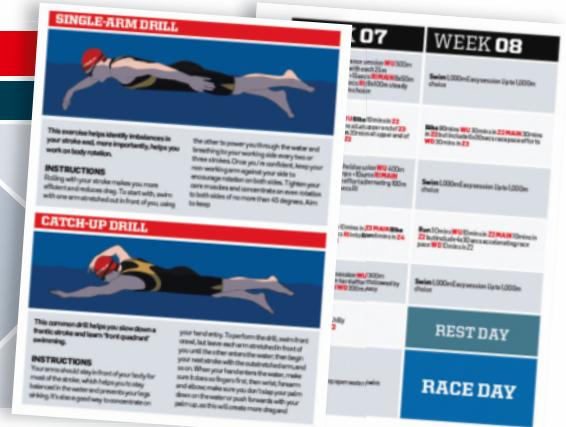
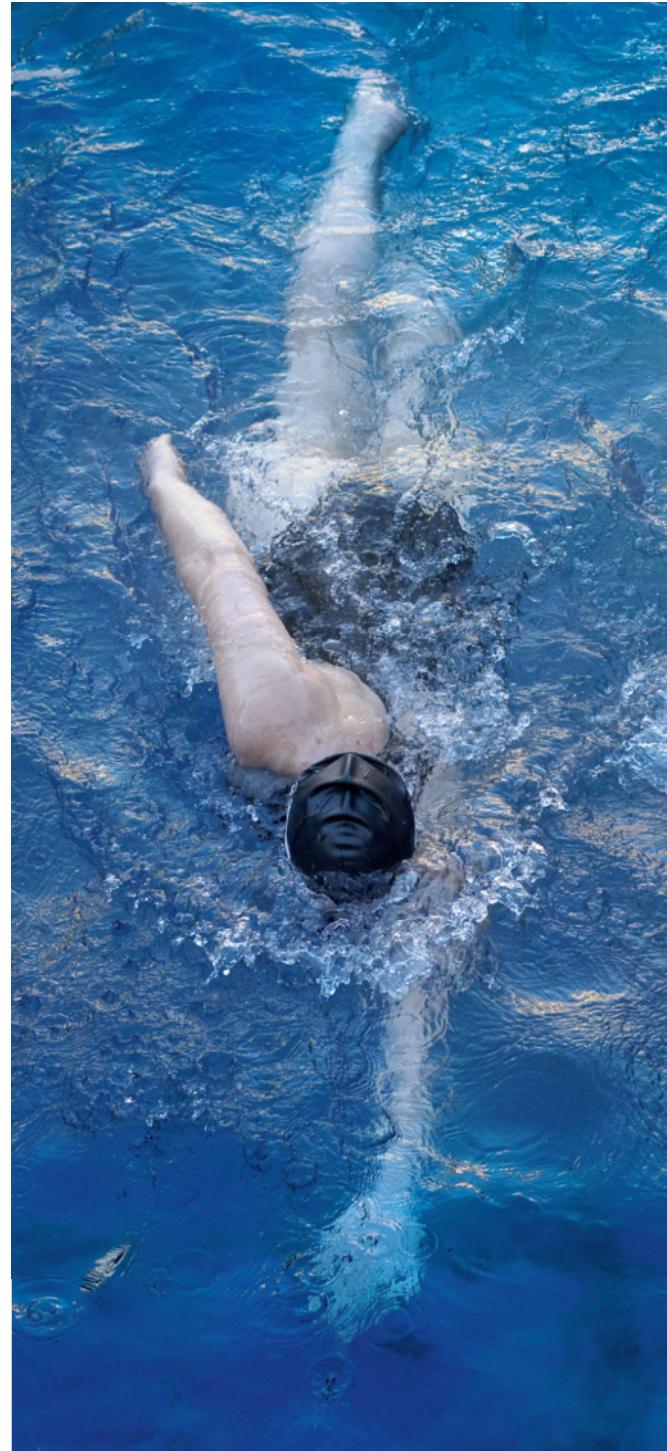
Cut out the guide following the dotted outline



Fold the guide in quarters using the fold guides



Now carry it with you for reference while training



TRAINING ZONES

USING THESE TRAINING Zones will help you train at the right intensity for each session. This helps develop specific aspects of your fitness, as well as making sure you don't overdo it.

You can either estimate your intensity using the Training Zone descriptions, or use a heart-rate monitor for a more precise measure. If you use a heart-rate monitor, use the percentages provided and subtract them from your maximum heart rate to calculate your zones. Tools like cycle power meters and GPS watches will also help track your training progress, but they're not essential for these plans.

These Training Zones are only a guide, so don't worry about being overly precise with heart rates because they'll fluctuate anyway. It's good to be mindful of your intensity but it's even more important that you get out there and enjoy your training.

ZONE 1 (Z1) Recovery

60 to 65% of your maximum. Easy pace, feels nice and light.

ZONE 2 (Z2) Steady

65 to 75% of your maximum. Fairly easy pace. Easy enough so that you could breathe just through your nose if you wanted to.

ZONE 3 (Z3) Tempo

75% to 80% of your maximum. A fairly hard but sustainable pace.

ZONE 4 (Z4) Race tempo

80 to 90% of your maximum. A hard pace that requires real focus to sustain.

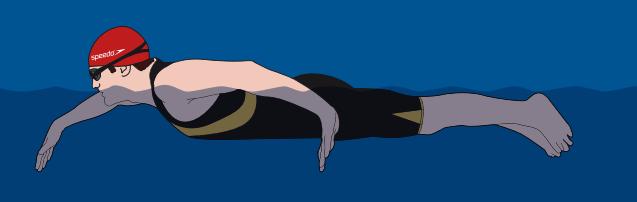
KEY

WU Warm up, **WD** Warm down, **MAIN** Main set, **FC** Front crawl, **KICK** Kick with a float held out in front of you, **BUILD** Gradually increase the intensity of each rep within a set, **PULL** Front crawl with a pull float between thighs

STAY IN THE TRAINING ZONE WITH TRIATHLON PLUS

FOLD1

HEAD-UP FRONT CRAWL

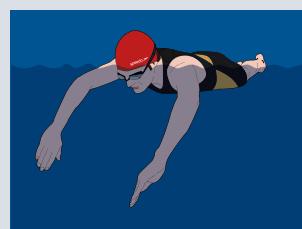


This is another great drill for learning to keep a high elbow and for recruiting the large muscles of your back, shoulders and core as well as your smaller arm muscles, resulting in a more powerful stroke. This drill will also help reduce your injury risk by using your large muscles, instead of putting lots of pressure on your small arm muscles.

INSTRUCTIONS

This drill is exactly as described: you need to swim front crawl with your head up. Keep in mind that this drill is not just about being able to sight, but is also about your catch. Concentrate on levering your fingers behind your wrist, keeping your wrist under your elbow, and pushing towards your hip. You can use hand paddles to make the drill harder if you need to.

FRONT SCULL



Sculling is often one of the first skills taught to new swimmers, because it's a great way to think about your body position and get a feel for the water.

INSTRUCTIONS

The front scull helps you get a strong 'catch' – the start of your stroke after your hand enters the water. Extend your arms out in front of you with a slight bend at the elbows. Your fingertips should be pointing forwards and down – make sure your wrists don't drop. Move your hands in a figure-of-eight movement as if mixing hot and cold water in the bath. If your legs keep sinking, use a pull buoy. You'll only move through the water slowly, but you should move – and if you start going backwards, check that your forearms are below your elbows and your fingers are below your wrists, pointing slightly downwards.

SINGLE-ARM DRILL



This exercise helps identify imbalances in your stroke and, more importantly, helps you work on body rotation.

INSTRUCTIONS

Rolling with your stroke makes you more efficient and reduces drag. To start, swim with one arm stretched out in front of you, using the

other to power you through the water and breathing to your working side every two or three strokes. Once you're confident, keep your passive arm against your side to encourage rotation on both sides. Tighten your core muscles and concentrate on even rotation to both sides of no more than 45 degrees. Keep your head still and body horizontal in the water.

CATCH-UP DRILL



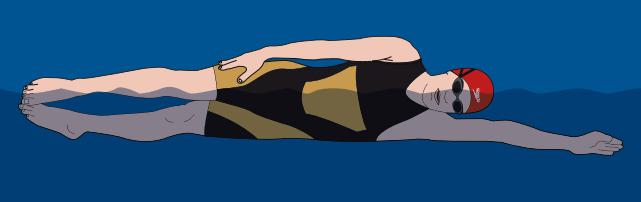
This common drill will help you slow down a frantic stroke and learn 'front quadrant' swimming.

INSTRUCTIONS

Your arms should stay in front of your body for most of the stroke, which helps you to stay balanced in the water and prevents your legs sinking. It's also a good way to concentrate on

your hand entry. Swim front crawl but leave each arm stretched in front of you until the other enters the water, then begin your next stroke with the outstretched arm, and so on. Make sure your hand enters the water fingers first, then your wrist, forearm and elbow; don't slap the water or push with your palm up – this will slow you down. Using finger paddles will help you position your hands properly.

SIDE KICK



This drill will help you learn to rotate your body and stay balanced in the water. You might find it easier with fins on.

INSTRUCTIONS

Pro triathlete Leanda Cave says: "A good way to visualise what body roll feels like is to imagine you're holding onto a rope tied to a bridge with one arm, as the current moves against you. Your body will naturally adjust to

one side as it's the most efficient way for the water to pass by." Kick down the pool on one side with your lower arm stretched out in front (and pointing slightly downwards as it would during a stroke, to avoid drag), turning your head to breathe when you need to. You can also try 'kick and glide' drills, where you swim for three strokes then pause on one side for five seconds, kicking, then repeat and pause on the other side.

FIST DRILL



This drill helps you feel the water with your forearm and improves your catch.

INSTRUCTIONS

In this drill, you will swim front crawl with your fists clenched. Because you can't rely on your hands to catch the water, you'll be forced to keep your elbows high and use your forearm to pull through. You may find you need to adapt a higher stroke rate than usual, and you'll need to kick strongly from the hip. Aim to keep your hips high in the water so you're not dragging your legs, which could slow you down. If you alternate laps of fist drill with normal front crawl, you should notice an immediate improvement in your arm position. Punching the water usually helps you get the lane to yourself when the pool is crowded, too!



EIGHT-WEEK SWIM GUIDE

WEEK 01		WEEK 02		WEEK 03		WEEK 04	
Mon	Swim 1,000m Endurance session WU 200m choice MAIN 4x100m FC +15secs RI, 6x50m PULL +20secs RI WD 100m choice	Swim 1,300m Endurance session WU 300m choice MAIN 4x200m alternating FC/PULL +15secs RI WD 200m choice	Mon	Swim 1,500m Endurance session WU 300m choice MAIN 5x200m +45secs RI as (1. steady 2. hard 3. race pace 4. hard 5. steady) WD 200m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Tue	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 2x10mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI, run 15mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 10mins in Z2	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 12mins then 8mins both at upper end of Z3 with 5mins RI, run 15mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 10mins in Z2	Tue	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 7,6,5,3mins all at upper end of Z3 with 2mins RI, run 15mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 9mins in Z2		Brick 40mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 15mins at upper end of Z3, run 10mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 5mins in Z2	
Wed	Swim 1,000m Threshold session WU 300m choice MAIN 5x100m as 25m hard/75m steady, 50m hard/50m steady, 75m hard/25m steady, 50m hard/50m steady, 25m hard/75m steady WD 200m choice	Swim 1,300m Threshold session WU 300m choice MAIN 8x100m at race pace effort +30secs RI WD 200m choice	Wed	Swim 1,500m Threshold session WU 300m choice MAIN 10x100m steady with first and last 15m at max effort +20secs RI WD 200m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Thu	Brick 50mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 4x3mins in Z4 +2mins RI, run 5mins in Z4 WD Run 18mins in Z2	Brick 55mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 3x4mins in Z4 +3mins RI, run 5mins in Z4 WD Run 18mins in Z2	Thu	Brick 50mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 6x2mins in Z4 +1min RI, run 5mins in Z4 WD Run 18mins in Z2		Brick 40mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 4x2mins in Z4 +1min RI, run 5mins in Z4 WD Run 10mins in Z2	
Fri	Swim 1,000m Speed session WU 300m choice MAIN 10x50m as 25m max effort/25m easy +30secs RI WD 200m easy	Swim 1,300m Speed session WU 300m choice MAIN 16x50m as 35m max effort/15m easy +30secs RI WD 200m choice	Fri	Swim 1,500m Speed session WU 300m choice MAIN 20x50m as 4x[reps 1-4 building pace, rep 5 holding pace] +15secs RI WD 200m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Sat	AM Run 30mins in Z2, hilly PM Bike 1hour in Z2	AM Run 35mins in Z2, hilly PM Bike 70mins in Z2	Sat	AM Run 40mins in Z2, hilly PM Bike 80mins in Z2		REST DAY	
Sun	Swim 1,000m Technique session WU 200m choice MAIN 3x200m as 25m drill/25m FC (drills: single arm/catch-up/scull) WD 200m choice	Swim 1,000m Technique session WU 200m choice MAIN 3x200m as 25m drill/25m FC (drills: scull/head-up front crawl/ single arm) WD 200m choice	Sun	Swim 1,000m Technique session WU 200m choice MAIN 3x200m as 25m drill/25m FC (drills: single arm/catch up/ single arm) WD 200m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	

WEEK 05		WEEK 06		WEEK 07		WEEK 08	
Mon	Swim 1,700m Endurance session WU 300m choice MAIN 6x200m alternating FC/PULL +20secs RI WD 200m choice	Swim 1,800m Endurance session WU 300m choice MAIN 300m FC +30secs RI, 3x100m PULL +15secs RI, 200m FC +20secs RI, 2x100m PULL +15secs RI, 100m FC +15secs RI; 100m PULL +15secs RI WD 100m KICK, 200m choice	Mon	Swim 1,800m Endurance session WU 300m choice, build 8x25m with each 25m progressively faster +15secs RI MAIN 8x50m at tempo effort +30secs RI; 8x100m steady +30secs RI WD 300m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Tue	Brick 70mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 2x15mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI, run 15mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 10mins in Z2	Brick 70mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 20mins then 10mins both at upper end of Z3 with 5mins RI, run 15mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 10mins in Z2	Tue	Brick 75mins WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 8,7,6,5mins all at upper end of Z3 with 2mins RI, run 20mins at upper end of Z3 WD Run 11mins in Z2		Bike 90mins WU 30mins in Z2 MAIN 30mins in Z2 but include 6x30secs race pace efforts WD 30mins in Z2	
Wed	Swim 1,700m Threshold session WU 300m choice MAIN 12x100m +30secs RI alternating steady/hard/max WD 200m choice	Swim 1,800m Threshold session WU 300m choice MAIN 4x50m building pace on reps 1-4 +15secs RI, 5x200m race pace effort +90secs RI WD 100m KICK, 200m choice	Wed	Swim 2,000m Threshold session WU 400m steady, 4x50m at tempo +10secs RI MAIN 10x100m race pace effort alternating 100m PULL/100m FC +20secs RI WD 400m choice		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Thu	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 5x3mins in Z4 +2mins RI, run 10mins in Z4 WD Run 18mins in Z2	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 4x4mins in Z4 +3mins recoveries into run 10mins in Z4 WD Run 15mins in Z2	Thu	Brick 1hour WU Bike 10mins in Z2 MAIN Bike 6x3mins in Z4 +90secs RI into run 6mins in Z4 WD Run 20mins in Z2		Run 30mins WU 10mins in Z2 MAIN 10mins in Z2 but include 4x30secs accelerating race pace WD 10mins in Z2	
Fri	Swim 1,700m Speed session WU 300m choice MAIN 6x100m race pace +30secs RI; 12x50m max effort +45secs RI WD 200m choice	Swim 1,800m Speed session WU 500m choice MAIN 20x50m as 4x[reps 1-4 building pace, rep 5 holding pace] +30secs RI per 50m, and 60-90secs RI between sets WD 300m choice	Fri	Swim 2,000m Speed session WU 300m steady MAIN 10x[50m hard effort followed by 100m easy] +15secs RI WD 200m easy		Swim 1,000m Easy session Up to 1,000m choice	
Sat	AM Run 50mins in Z2, hilly PM Bike 1hour 30mins in Z2	AM Run 1hour in Z2, hilly PM Bike 1hour 45mins in Z2	Sat	AM Run 1hour in Z2, hilly PM Bike 2hours in Z2		REST DAY	
Sun	Swim 1,000m Non-stop open-water swim (preferably) or pool technique session WU 200m choice MAIN 3x200m as 25m drill/25m FC (drills: front scull/head-up front crawl/single arm) WD 200m choice	Swim 1,000m Non-stop open-water swim (preferably) or pool technique session WU 200m choice MAIN 3x200m as 25m drill/25m FC (drills: single arm/catch-up/ single arm) WD 200m choice	Sun	Swim 1,500m Non-stop open-water swim		RACE DAY	